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Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7504th meeting
Monday, 17 August 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Ms. Sapag Muñoz de la Peña
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. Gasso Matoses
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

After consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"The Security Council recalls its resolutions 2042 (2012), 2043 (2012), 2118 (2013), 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2170 (2014), 2175 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2199 (2015), and 2235 (2015) and presidential statements of 3 August 2011, 2 October 2013 and 24 April 2015.

"The Security Council reaffirms its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria and all other States affected by the Syrian conflict, and to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

"The Security Council stresses that the only sustainable solution to the current crisis in Syria is through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, with a view to full implementation of the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 and, in this regard, emphasizes the urgency for all parties to work diligently and constructively towards this goal.

"The Security Council reiterates its demands as set forth in resolution 2139 (2014) that all parties cease any attacks against civilians as such, as well as any indiscriminate use of weapons in populated areas, including such use involving shelling and barrel bombs; as well as its demand for the immediate end to arbitrary detention, torture, kidnappings, abductions and forced disappearances of civilians and the immediate release of those arbitrarily detained, including journalists and humanitarian personnel; stresses the importance of implementation of such demands, in accordance with relevant provisions of international law, in creating an environment conducive to the commencement of substantive political negotiations and in building confidence among the parties; and reiterates, in this regard, that the primary responsibility to protect its population lies with the Syrian authorities.

"The Security Council expresses its gravest concern that parts of Syria are under control of terrorist groups such

"The Security Council expresses its gravest concern that parts of Syria are under control of terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the Al-Nusra Front (ANF), condemns the ongoing and multiple terrorist acts by ISIL, ANF and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida, condemns further the targeting of civilians based on their ethnicity, religion and/or confessional affiliations, expresses concern about the negative impact of terrorism, violent extremist ideology in support of terrorism, and action that destabilizes Syria and the region, with a devastating humanitarian impact on the civilian population, reaffirms its resolve to address all aspects of the threat; and calls on all parties to commit to putting an end to terrorist acts perpetrated by ISIL, ANF and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida.

"The Security Council commends the Special Envoy for his efforts in convening the Geneva consultations, from April to June 2015, with a broad range of stakeholders with respect to the crisis in Syria as part of the effort to operationalize the 2012 Geneva communiqué.

"The Security Council supports the approach set out by the Special Envoy that in order to work towards political negotiations and a political transition based on the Geneva communiqué, four thematic areas need to be addressed through more focused consultations and discussions with the Syrian parties in four thematic working groups: safety and protection for all; political and legal issues; military, security and counterterrorism issues; and continuity of public services and reconstruction and development.

"The Security Council urges all parties to engage in good faith in the efforts of the Special Envoy, through his good offices, and to continue consultations and thematic discussions, and notes that these efforts can build on recent initiatives,

including the meetings in Moscow, Cairo, Paris and Astana.

"The Security Council demands that all parties work urgently towards the comprehensive implementation of the Geneva communiqué, aimed at bringing an end to all violence, violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law and the launching of a Syrian-led political process leading to a political transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people and enables them independently and democratically to determine their future, including through the establishment of an inclusive transitional governing body with full executive powers, which shall be formed on the basis of mutual consent while ensuring continuity of governmental institutions.

"The Security Council welcomes the Secretary-General's statement of 29 July 2015 that there can be no military solution to the Syrian conflict, and reiterates its endorsement of a political solution through implementation of the Geneva communiqué.

"The Security Council stresses that rapid progress on a political solution should include full participation by all segments of Syrian society, including women, and represents the only sustainable way to resolve the situation in Syria peacefully.

"The Security Council emphasizes the need for robust international and regional assistance in support of the Special Envoy's efforts.

"The Security Council expresses grave alarm that the Syrian crisis has become the largest humanitarian emergency crisis in the world today, threatening peace and security in the region, and that at least 250,000 people have been killed, including well over 10,000 children; 12 million people have been forced to flee their homes, including over 4 million who have sought refuge in neighbouring countries; and more than 12.2 million people in Syria require urgent humanitarian assistance. In this regard, the Security Council recalls its decision as set forth in resolution 2165 (2014) that all Syrian parties to the conflict shall enable the immediate and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance directly to people throughout Syria.

"The Security Council recalls the need for all parties to respect the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law and the United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian emergency assistance.

"The Security Council requests that the Secretary-General report back to the Security Council on the results of the next phase of consultations within 90 days."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2015/15.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): While it did not block the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2015/15 and joined in the consensus, the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela does not subscribe to paragraphs 8 and 10 of the statement because we believe that they violate the sovereignty and the right to self-determination of the Syrian people by promoting its political transition, including the establishment of a transitional Government, without its consent, and thereby contravenes the Charter of the United Nations.

The legitimacy of a Government is reflected in respect for its Constitution and the support of its people, expressed through the vote, within the framework of the sovereign determination of its own political, economic and social systems. Venezuela believes that, to that end, the establishment of a transitional Government in Syria with full executive powers would violate the principles of the Charter of the United Nations with respect to equality among States, as well as respect for the self-determination of peoples, which would represent a very dangerous precedent for international peace and security.

The Council must be impartial and objective in addressing the Syrian crisis. Disregarding from the outset the legitimacy of the Government of President Bashar Al-Assad violates the sovereignty of the Syrian people, contrary to the presidential statement that we have adopted. The Council could make serious mistakes in managing this crisis if it were motivated by the national interests of some of its members by disregarding the weighty and important role that the Government of Syria will continue to play in resolving the conflict. We are concerned by the fact that some members of the Council resort to a double standard with respect

to assessing a given Government's legitimacy or lack thereof. We must therefore question the legitimacy of other Governments that are in situations similar to that of Syria yet enjoy the political support of those Council members on the basis of national considerations.

We have repeatedly stressed that a peaceful solution to the armed conflict in that brotherly country cannot be found without the participation of the Syrian authorities representing their own people. The Government of that country is waging a stubborn campaign against the terrorism, carried out by violent non-State actors, of which it has been a victim through the violent actions of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), the Al-Nusra Front and the Jaish Al-Fateh, among others. The fight against these terrorist organizations requires the wholehearted support of the international community to defeat the extremism feeding on chaos, hatred and intolerance.

A bloody and terrible struggle against terrorism is being fought on the front lines of Syria. If the Syrian Government of President Bashar Al-Assad were defeated by force of arms and the black flag of ISIS were to fly over Damascus, culminating in the greatest and most terrible tragedy for the Syrian people — even worse than the current situation — its devastating and destabilizing effects would be felt in neighbouring countries, the Mediterranean and throughout Europe. We exercise our responsibility by sounding the alarm against this situation today, before it is too late.

Venezuela has insisted on the need to avoid the repetition of the serious political mistakes committed in Iraq and Libya, where with false evidence and under the pretext of protecting civilians a change of Government was promoted through military intervention, resulting in an institutional collapse of those States that was subsequently exploited by terrorist organizations to promote, with the support of foreign actors, their criminal agenda at the expense of their peoples' aspirations to peace, social justice and development.

We consider it important to stress that institutional collapse in those countries has exacerbated the violence in the Middle East and Africa emanating from the presence and actions of Al-Qaida and ISIS terrorists. The weapons that were supplied to non-State actors to overthrow those Governments are the very ones that terrorist groups are now using to shed the blood of the peoples of those countries. We therefore demand an end to the financial and military assistance being provided to these criminal groups, in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

We have heard the notorious complaints about the use of chemical weapons by ISIS, which is clearly a war crime and a crime against humanity that we condemn unequivocally. Those responsible must be brought to justice in response to such heinous acts.

The procedure applied by some members of the Council in drafting the presidential statement adopted today lacked the inclusiveness required in any negotiation process. The elected members of this body we again not invited to participate in the preparation of that document. It was presented in its final form by the permanent members for adoption by the other members of this body. Such practices affect the transparency and working methods of the Security Council, which acts on behalf of the States Members, as provided for in the Charter of the United Nations. Council unity requires the full participation of its members in building decisions concerning international peace and security that are mandatory on all States of the international community. We reiterate our call for an end to this practice undemocratic because it erodes the credibility and legitimacy of this organ.

Venezuela, as an elected member of the Security Council, will always raise its voice and lay out its reasons to the conscience of the international community and the General Assembly as the organ that embodies the legitimacy of the United Nations. Despite disassociating itself from paragraphs 8 and 10 of the presidential statement for the reasons I have just given, Venezuela reaffirms its own constructive spirit in not preventing the adoption of this document because we sincerely believe that it offers an opportunity for peace and political negotiations.

In conclusion, our country reaffirms its full support for the diplomatic efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, whom we trust for his recognized human qualities and diplomatic skills, which will help him to bring all parties, including the Syrian Government, into the negotiation process and the promotion of a negotiated, peaceful and political solution to the conflict. We reiterate our commitment to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the Syrian Arab Republic, in line with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 3.25 p.m.